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Viewing cable 07BOGOTA8045, AMBASSADOR'S NOVEMBER 1 MEETING WITH FORMER

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07BOGOTA8045	2007-11-14 00:10	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

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VZCZCXYZ0019
PP RUEHWEB

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0096
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S NOVEMBER 1 MEETING WITH FORMER
PRESIDENT ANDRES PASTRANA

Classified By: Ambassador William R. Brownfield.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1.(C) Former President Pastrana told the Ambassador on November 1 that U.S. Congressional failure to approve the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would isolate Colombia and leave it vulnerable to pressure from Venezuela. He criticized Uribe's decision to allow Chavez to play a facilitator role in humanitarian talks with the FARC, and voiced concern that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has exploited the process to regain international political space. Pastrana said a third Uribe term would damage the Colombian Constitution's checks and balances, and sought USG support, as appropriate, to refute charges that he created a safehaven for narcoterrorists during his presidency. END SUMMARY.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

2.(C) The Ambassador paid a courtesy call on November 1 on former President Andres Pastrana. Pastrana said U.S. domestic politics complicate prospects for U.S. congressional passage of the FTA. The Congress will not consider the agreement in 2007, and 2008 has the Presidential election. Moreover, President Uribe made a mistake in polarizing the issue with the opposition Polo Democratico Alternativo (PDA). Pastrana said he persuaded Bogota Polo Democratic Mayor Lucho Garzon and leftist Valle de Cauca Governor Angelino Garzon to support the agreement. In the current polarized climate, however, they would no longer do so. Still, Pastrana said that with various Latin American countries "tilting" towards Venezuela or the United States, FTA passage remains key. U.S. congressional failure to act would isolate Colombia and leave it vulnerable to Venezuelan pressure.

PRESIDENT CHAVEZ AND A HUMANITARIAN ACCORD

3.(C) Pastrana labeled Uribe's decision to accept President Chavez as a facilitator in humanitarian exchange talks with the FARC an "error." Chavez wants to exploit the process to gain international prestige, and cannot be trusted. He added that the FARC has exploited the process to date to regain some of the international space it lost after the collapse of the Caguan peace process. Pastrana fears that the FARC will demand to open offices in Caracas, Managua, and Quito as part of the humanitarian exchange talks. If Uribe refuses to accept this, he would leave himself open to blame for the lack of progress. Pastrana said Uribe should propose that a humanitarian accord address the plight of all of the FARC's kidnap victims--as well as the group's continued use of this practice--to put the FARC on the defensive.

4.(C) Asked about other international participation in the process, Pastrana said the FARC traditionally distrusted foreign participation in its talks with the GOC. He believed, however, that the FARC changed its view of the international community after European and UN intervention averted the breakdown of the Caguan process in January 2002. Since then, the FARC has felt it could use the international community to advance its goals. Pastrana said that, the FARC may think that with French President Sarkozy and Chavez involved, it does not need to talk directly with the GOC on a humanitarian exchange.

AN URIBE THIRD TERM

5.(C) Pastrana said a second constitutional amendment to enable Uribe to run for a third term would severely damage the checks and balances built into Colombia's Constitution.

The amendment process would also heighten polarization and discourage good candidates from running. Uribe has done much for Colombia, but he needs to understand that it is time for someone else.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

6.(C) Pastrana voiced concern that the International Criminal Court could attempt to prosecute him for allegedly creating a safehaven for narcoterrorists through the Caguan process. The Colombia media reported several false accusations that he facilitated narcotrafficking and terrorist acts. Pastrana asked for USG support, as appropriate, to refute these allegations. (Note: Pastrana sent a letter, dated October 18, addressing these concerns which Post forwarded to the Department.)
Brownfield